

(bright upbeat instrumental music)

Peter: The Lord is risen. And the voice from the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." (indistinct responses) Amen and amen. (bright upbeat instrumental music) (upbeat instrumental music) (bright upbeat instrumental music) (upbeat instrumental music) The proof of God's amazing love is this that it was while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. It is in the same Jesus, because we have faith in him that do he dare with confidence to approach all mighty God, let us confess our sins to God. Oh, holy God. On this joy as Easter Sunday, it is difficult for us to confess our sin. We give thanks. We rejoice. We are exhilarated, but we pray, oh God, that our rejoicing will not blind us to the needs of the world. That our affirmation of the resurrection will not the continuing reality of the crucifixion. So now, oh God, we come before as a disobedient church, our loyalty to you has been lost in the conflict of human loyalties. Our own self interest has made us insensitive to your command. Our past is precious to us and we have allowed it to set limits upon the present and the future. Our worship and service have been feeble. We have not responded in love to you nor to the needs of our neighbor and the campus. Break our apathy and our arrogance with the judgment of your love and the assurance of the resurrection faith. Then in mercy heal us, oh holy spirit, causing us as a community to be born a new in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Let us continue in silent, personal confession and prayer with God. This statement is completely reliable and should be accepted everywhere. Christ Jesus entered the world to rescue sinners. If any person is in Christ, that person becomes new all together. The past is finished and gone. Everything has become fresh and new. God's mercy never ends. I tell you in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen. (bright upbeat instrumental music) (upbeat instrumental music) Let us hear the word of God. On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees of fat things full of marrow of wine on the lees well-refined and he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces and the reproach of his people. He will take away from all the earth for the Lord has spoken. It will be set on that day Lord, this is our God. We have waited for him that he might save us. This is the Lord. We have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Let the congregation stand for the reading of the gospel. "But on the first day of the week at early Dawn, they went to the tomb, (clears throat) taking the spices which they had prepared, and they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. But when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this behold two men stood by them in dazzling apparel, and as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" "Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." And they remembered his words and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the 11 and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles." Here, ends the reading of the lesson. (bright upbeat instrumental music) Let us affirm our faith. We are not alone. We live in God's word. We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come in the true man, Jesus to reconcile and make new who works in us and others by his

spirit. We trust him. He calls us to be in his church to celebrate his presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen our judge and our hope in life in death. In life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. The Lord be with you. (indistinct responses) Let us pray. The Lord is risen, indeed. Hallelujah. I am he that lives and was dead, says the Lord and behold, I am alive forevermore, hallelujah. Oh God, spirit of life of love, of hope, creator, Redeemer, and life giver. It is you O God who guides the stars in their mysterious paths, way out beyond our reach. You who laid the foundations and the principles for this universe in which we live. And it is you who cares for and helps the growth and fulfillment of every living thing. We know you have a destiny and a place for each of us here and in the world to come. And we know you help us find our place when we try to find it in fellowship with you, we know you are always with us. Thanks be to you oh God. Especially this day oh God. We know and feel your presence in the raised life and spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord, for he was crucified. He was dead. Now he is raised, raised to live and be with us and with every person who receives his spirit, oh, how we need to be raised oh God, raised from hopeless doubt, indifferent despair and endless death. We need affirmation. We need assurance. We need life. God of all mercies. Listen now, as we your children lift up our sisters and brothers before you, those who mourn, those who suffer, those who hurt, those in prison, those alone, all alone, those hungry, and those who are just weary and tired father in your mercy sustain and support them all the day long. And when the shadows lengthen and night draws nigh help all of us to feel secure in your love. Oh, what a great day this is Lord, for, for those of us who claim Christ as Lord help us this day and in the days to come to know that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all your creation shall be able to separate us from your love, which we know in Christ Jesus. For, oh God, Christ has come, lived, died and been raised for us for now and forever. And now let us pray the prayer, which our Lord has taught us, praying, our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power, the glory forever. Amen. On this joyous, glad Easter day in the name of Christ may I welcome you to this place and to this service of celebration of the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. If you worship here regularly, it's good to have you where you belong. If you're visiting, we rejoice in your presence just as much and pray that for whatever reason you have come from whatever place you have come, God's spirit, the love of Christ might become very, very real to you in this holy hour. We are pleased and grateful that the worship services from Duke Chapel, as many of you know, have been broadcast each Sunday for 35 years on radio station, WDNC. We appreciate this long and good and mutually beneficial relationship. New station management though, has decided to discontinue the service with today's broadcast, being the last on WDNC. Beginning next Sunday so that those of you who do worship by radio, when not here, you may know the services will be broadcast on WDBS on FM at 107.1 on the FM dial. We are pleased that WDBS we'll be broadcasting the service live at 11 o'clock each Sunday, and that there will be no break in these services being heard by those who worship with us by radio. Tonight at seven, o'clock a very special, rich, meaningful service awaits you, us. As the North Carolina Symphony and this Duke Chapel choir will join together in a presentation of the Mahler Resurrection Symphony. You are invited, seven o'clock tonight. Again, we rejoice in your presence this day, and now we rejoice as the beloved Dean emeritus of his chapel, Dr. James T. Clelin brings to us the word of God on this glad Easter day, Dr. Clelin.

Dr. James: The grace of the risen Lord be with us all. (coughs) Easter is the oldest of the festivals of the Christian Church. Easter has every right to this primacy because it is the historical starting place of our faith. As St. Paul puts it quite bluntly. If Christ was not raised, then our gospel is null and void. And so is your faith. No Easter then no Christian Church, as we know it. Oh, there might have, pre-existed a small association of Jesus' followers, perhaps (indistinct) with the sermon on the mountain (mumbles). They however, would have been obliterated by the Romans in AD70 (indistinct) when Jerusalem was destroyed. Moreover no Easter, no Christmas and no Friday, (mumbles). (inaudible talks) Without Easter, Good Friday would have been for the followers of Jesus, Bad Friday. (inaudible talks) Why should Jesus's birth be celebrated in Christmas if there is no truth to the Easter story. But Easter does three things, first it vindicates God. Jesus did not have himself rise from the dead. He was raised from the dead by God. (inaudible talks) God raised him to life again (indistinct). (inaudible talks) God endorsed Jesus, no obstruct, nothing stands in the way. Peter's way of announcing this in that first sermon was let all Israel accept as certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Messiah. Hey, may not have been before his death. God has made him through the resurrection, Lord and Messiah. And as the late Henry Sloane Coffin put it, "The indisputable Easter fact is that Jesus was a more potent figure in Jerusalem in the weeks and months after his death in Calvary." And then when he rode into the city, amid the crowds or sat with his disciples in the upper room. Third, the Easter message encourages us today. As Paul discovered and proclaimed the spirit of the risen, Jesus can take possession of a person. Remember how Paul put it? "I live yet, not I, but Christ lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Moreover, that fact meant for Paul and for Christians down the ages that this indwelling spirit is a nearness, a pledge of continuing life, eternal life with Jesus in the presence of God hereafter. Now do we begin to appreciate why Easter is the primary festival of the Christian year, more important than Christmas, than good Friday. No Easter, no Christianity in anything like the form in which it has been transmitted for 19 centuries. But you ask how can this be, a man raised from the dead? It's hard for us who are oriented by science and encouraged to be quote, "Objective", end of quote, to accept Easter. Would the various and contradictory accounts of the resurrection amount to anything today in a court of law, it's a valid and constantly recurring question. Take a for instance, who saw the risen Jesus first? Now wouldn't you think there'd be unanimity on that? But it wasn't Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, Salome, Joanna, Peter, the two men from Amyris. But, again, what kind of a body did the risen Jesus have? It was recognizable sometimes, but it could appear and disappear. It more than once entered into a room where the disciples had gathered behind locked doors. Jesus' first word to them on the first occasion was a wise man wise, when all he said was Shalom, peace. He saw that they looked startled, terrified, worried. Well, let Paul come to our help again. He tells the Corinthians that there is a difference between unearthly body and a spiritual body, but in each case, the noun is the word body adding that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. But it is the same person who once possessed the earthly body who will inherit the spiritual body. The Easter message then is one of assurance. It vindicates God, it validates Jesus, it encourages us. However you ask me, what can we accept as somewhat valid evidence for the resurrection? There are two facts separated by almost 2000 years and yet intimately related, which make up an answer. The first is the transformation of the 11 disciples from the lying disappointed puzzled cowards of Friday into the tall what witnesses for a living spirit of Jesus. No law court, no jail cell, no hostile mob, no cruel death could subdue or alter them. They were Christians, Christ men backed by a group of women. They were never, again, lying, never cowardly. And the second is like unto the first, the living Christian community today in which the spirit of

Jesus still lives. And acts through the members, your participation in the service this morning, either within the chapel or with a last thanks to WDNC for the last time over that station on the air, you and that radio congregation are witnesses to the resurrection. Otherwise, why would you be here? Why would you be listening? Now the resurrection, which is the key stone of the Christian faith and love and hope. For years, almost too many to number I've searched for a visible sign and symbol of Easter. The crucifix won't do that is the symbol of the Friday before Easter. The empty cross won't do, it signifies nothing, except maybe that it's waiting for the next victim. And his name is Legion. And there's last November in Florida, I came up a Roman Catholic church, newly built impressive in its modern architecture. I went inside and note, suspended over the altar was a great cross with a card figure of Jesus. It is us stunning piece of work, but the even more stunning fact is that Jesus is not fastened to the cross. His outstretched arms are that height above the horizontal bar. They are not horizontal. They are stretched upwards. His feet are free from the nails. This is not the Jesus who was taken down from the cross by friendly human hands. This is Jesus the Christ being taken up by God and anticipation of the resurrection. A priest spoke to me. I told him my excitement and my delight in at long last, finding a symbol for Easter. He told me that it was planned, designed and made as a sign of the resurrection. It may be unique in the United States. I wish that were one more. Where? Here. Do you realize sitting there that we have an eight foot wooden cross top the radars. Chapel (indistinct) told me that for two years back there in the back of the church, I never saw it. I'm sure you can't see it now. Whoever built the windows and made the rear doors just collided. Somebody blundered beautifully, beautifully. (brethren laughing) But perhaps so that you may see the cross one day it will be floodlit, one day. That means that seven years, at least at least. (brethren laughing) And perhaps one day and this'll be about 14 years. The chapel will possess a carved figure of Jesus to a company that rear doors cross like the one in the parish of St. Margaret Mary in Winter Park, the sign and the symbol of the Easter Christ. Now the choir will finish this meditation for me. The Anthem begins quietly with the odd recognition of Jesus crucified, crucifixes. It ends in triumph with the blessing affirmation of Jesus resurrected it resurrects. Let me tell you, brethren it's good to be a fellow worker with choir and musicians like these people. So let it be. (bright upbeat music) (upbeat instrumental music) (bright upbeat instrumental music) (bright upbeat instrumental music)

Peter: Oh, God, we know we need you more than you need us. We know we need your gifts more than you need ours. We offer these gifts and we offer ourselves again as ministers of your love to help bind all peoples together in Christ in the name of our risen Lord, we offer these gifts and ourselves. Amen. (bright upbeat instrumental music) Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the eternal covenant, equipped you with everything good that you may do his will working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, our Lord to whom be glory, dominion, majesty, and power forever and ever. (bright upbeat music) (bright upbeat music) (bell ringing) (upbeat instrumental music)